





## **READING OLD HANDWRITING MADE EASY**

Most old records are handwritten. As you search old documents trying to find information for your ancestors, you may come across a handwritten record that seems impossible to read. Do not get discouraged. There are ways to get familiar with handwriting of individuals. Some suggestions follow.



### **LETTERS**

- Try to recognize one letter at a time. In the samples that follow here, over each handwritten letter has been typed its corresponding printed letter.
- Try to find in the document something that you already know, such as the date or the name of the place where the record was created. This will help you recognize the letters of this particular writing.
- If you do not know the date, check in other places of the document where this may appear such as at the bottom, next to the signature(s) where the date or the place are repeated; maybe they appear clearer there.
- If you do not know the place, maybe it appears on the heading of the document where the name of the place is usually printed
- You may want to take note and maybe make a list of the letters that you have recognized so you can refer to this list later




### **Combination of letters**

- An στ was often written as  or 
- An ου was often written as 
- An ει was often written as 



### **Variation of letters**

- The letter “ι” sometimes appears as  The line under the “ι” indicates a heavier pronunciation of this vowel
- The letter “α” sometimes appears as 
- The letter “ρ” at the beginning of a word, most of the times appears with an aspiration mark on it

### **Abbreviation of names**

- Κωνσταντίνος often appears as Κων/ος
- Θεόδωρος may appear as Θεοδ’
- Ιωάννης often appears as Ιω’ for example  or  or 



## Abbreviation of words

- The word “και” often appears as  or as 
- The word Σεβαστής may appear as Σ<sup>ης</sup>


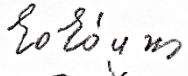
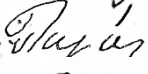
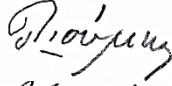

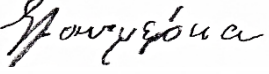
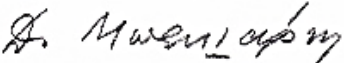
## Abbreviation of months

- The month Σεπτέμβριος sometimes is written as 7βριος
- The month Οκτώβριος sometimes is written as 8βριος
- The month Νοέμβριος sometimes is written as 9βριος
- The month Δεκέμβριος sometimes is written as 10βριος

## Prefix of names

- “Χατζη” is a prefix that appears in some surnames. This in old records is written as X”. For example Χατζηκώστας will be written as X”κώστας
- “Παπα” is another prefix that appears in some surnames. This in old records is written as Π” or  or sometimes as . For example Παπακώστας will be written as Π”κώστας

## EXAMPLES OF NAMES IN RECORDS

	= Δ. Ζαχαρίου
	= Τοτόμης
	= Παγας
	= Λιούμης
	= Τραγέας
	= Τζουμέρκα
	= Δ. Μπεκιάρης

## NUMBERS

### Numbers in Alphabetic Form

In some older records, letters of the Greek alphabet were used as numbers, instead of the Arabic numbers which are being used today. The following chart shows which Greek letters correspond to the Arabic numbers.

<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Greek</i>
1	α'	30	λ'
2	β'	40	μ'
3	γ'	50	ν'
4	δ'	60	ξ'
5	ε'	70	ο'
6	ς' or στ'	80	π'
7	ζ'	90	Ϟ'
8	η'	100	ρ'
9	θ'	200	σ'
10	ι'	300	τ'
11	ια'	400	υ'
12	ιβ'	500	φ'
13	ιγ'	600	χ'
14	ιδ'	700	ψ'
15	ιε'	800	ω'
16	ις' or ιστ'	900	Ϡ'
17	ιζ'	1000	σα
18	ιη'	2000	σβ
19	ιθ'	3000	σγ
20	κ'	4000	σδ
21	κα'	5000	σε
22	κβ'	6000	σστ
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

### Examples of Numbers

Some handwritten numbers are hard to recognize, especially those written in the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The following examples have been photocopied from old Greek documents:

$$1816 = 1816$$

$$1818 = 1818$$

$$1811 = 1811$$

$$1762 = 1762$$

$$1751 = 1751$$

$$1769 = 1765$$

$$1739 = 1739$$

$$1817 = 1817$$

$$1839 = 1839$$

$1694 = 1694$  in this case the recorder used the symbol  $\varphi$  for the number 16, he used  $\gamma$  for the number 9 and the letter  $\delta$  for the number 4 because it is the letter the ancient Greeks were using for number 4 (see table above). This date was spelled in another place of the document, which helped us understand what the date was.

$43 = 43$  the number 4 presents many variations and it is the most difficult to recognize

$1840 = 1840$  on this date the  $4$  tilted counterclockwise  $\curvearrowright$

$4 = 4$  on this date the  $4$  tilted counterclockwise  $\curvearrowright$

$$\alpha = 4$$

$1814 = 1814$  on this date the  $4$  is tilted clockwise  $\curvearrowleft$  Here the recorder used letters for the two first digits and numbers for the two last ones.

$1797 = 1797$  here, letters were used for the two first digits and numbers for the two last ones

$$2 \text{ or } \beta = 2$$

$5 = 5$  This is  $5$  tilted counterclockwise  $\curvearrowright$

$$\gamma = 7$$

$$\varphi = 8$$